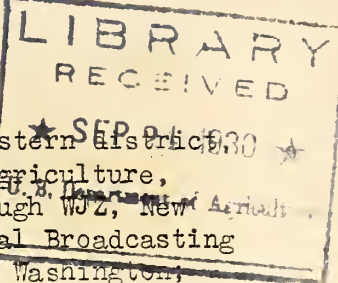


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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUGS -- No. 19.

Tuesday, July 8, 1930.



A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief, eastern district Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time through WOZ, New York and the following other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company: KWK, St. Louis; WREN, Kansas City; KFAB, Lincoln; WRC, Washington; WBZA, Boston; KSTP, St. Paul; WSM, Nashville; WAPI, Birmingham; WJAX, Jacksonville; WFTF, Raleigh; WRVA, Richmond.

Good morning my radio friends, your Government representative telling you how your foods and drugs are safeguarded through the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act, and telling you how to read food and drug labels is with you once again.

I have been telling you how to read labels for many weeks. I am trying to be of constructive service to the housewives of the Nation. My effort is to make you intelligent label readers and therefore discriminating buyers.

My story today is about a product called "Ox-aline". If you go in for word derivation you will probably conclude that ox-aline will have something to do with oxen or perhaps meat. You are right! - Ox-aline was a product which was sold to butchers to be used in ground meat. The label for this product claimed for it that it was a meat color, a purely vegetable meat color. The label said ox-aline is indispensable to market men and sausage makers. No where on the label was there a statement that ox-aline contained a chemical preservative. - No where could we find any mention of the fact. No hint even. Your Government inspector knew that the expression "Indispensable to market men and sausage makers" spelled chemical preservative. He therefore collected a sample of ox-aline and what do you suppose the Government chemist found? - He found in the product a large quantity, a large percentage of boric acid, a chemical preservative, a poisonous chemical preservative. Of course ox-aline was indispensable to market men and sausage makers, for it would embalm meat and it would permit the market men and sausage makers to grind up meat for sale, which came from spoiled trimmings. Ox-aline was a very useful preparation for the market men and the sausage maker, but a dangerous one for you, Mr. and Mrs. Consuming public. What happened to Ox-aline? A Federal Court was asked to pass on it and this court decreed the product to be an outlaw in commerce, and not entitled to the channels of trade because it was declared to violate the terms of the Federal Food and Drugs Act. So endeth Ox-aline and the lies on its labels, and thus by action such as this my friends is your food and drug supply protected by the Federal Food and Drugs Act.

My friends, my read-the-label subject today is soft drinks.

You will be amazed when I tell you that approximately eleven billion bottles of non-alcoholic beverages are sold in the United States every year and a large proportion of this eleven billion bottles is consumed by your children.

It is exceedingly important that you read beverage labels and the statements on the metal crown caps very carefully. This is true for a large number of reasons. In the first place you ought to know whether you are getting a genuine fruit product or an imitation one. You ought to know whether the beverage you buy contains benzoate of soda or sulphur dioxide.

You ought to know whether the beverage you use belongs to that class which contain the stimulant drug caffeine. You ought to know whether the beverage you buy contains saccharin instead of sugar. You ought to know how much of the beverage is contained in the bottle you buy if you are making the most intelligent purchases, and there are a great many other things that reading labels on beverage containers will tell you.

Perhaps the most important class of beverages is the fruit juices. The juice of apples, grapes, grapefruits, oranges, limes, lemons, loganberries, pineapples, and pomegranates can be purchased on the market and recently tomato juice and sauerkraut juice have been introduced in bottles and cans. When you see the names, grapefruit juice, orange juice, grape juice, etc. on labels, and when these names are not accompanied by any other explanatory statement of composition you will be sure that the products are the pure juices of the fruits named.

Since fruits vary in sweetness it is customary to standardize the juices by the addition of sugar. When sugar is added you will find a plain statement on the label such as, "Sugar added"; or "Sweetened with Sugar". Fruit juices are perishable and in order to prevent spoilage, it is necessary to pasteurize them or to preserve them with chemical preservatives. The objection to pasteurization, which is a heat treatment, is that frequently heating slightly changes the taste of the fruit juice, and for this reason, some manufacturers preserve their products with benzoate of soda. This preservative alters the taste of the fruit juice somewhat and produces a slight burning sensation on the palate, which is noticeable to those who have a trained sense of taste. Sulphur dioxide, a chemical preservative, is employed instead of benzoate of soda very commonly in West India lime juice and Catawba grape juice. The chemical preservatives I have named are not prohibited under the Federal Food and Drugs Act, but when used their presence must be declared on the label. Many people prefer food products without chemical preservatives in them, and those who do are entitled to the information as to whether or not chemical preservatives have been used and they may obtain this information by reading the labels.

I have not mentioned that water is added to fruit juices. When water is added to fruit juices they may no longer be called or labeled as fruit juices. They then become fruit ades and this brings us to the second class of beverages.

Orangeade is defined in the dictionary as a beverage made from orange juice, sugar and water. This is a very good definition for this class of beverages known as fruit ades, or beverages consisting of the juice of the named fruit, and sugar and water; and so my label reading friends when you buy a beverage labeled with the word orangeade, lemonade, grapeade, and the like, without any other explanatory statements of composition, you may be sure that you are getting a beverage consisting of nothing but fruit juice, sugar and water. If in addition, the label bears the word "Sparkling" or "Carbonated", you will know that the water which is added to the fruit juice

is effervescent or charged water, that is, it is water which has been impregnated with carbon dioxide gas.

Now as a matter of fact, you will not find on the market very many pure fruit ades, although it is likely that in the future these products will be more largely sold than in the past, since they may be more successfully manufactured by recently developed methods.

Instead of pure fruit ades, most of the beverages of this type are deficient in the juice of the fruit named and that deficiency is made up by the addition of tartaric or citric acid and by the addition of sugar and artificial color, which simulates the color of the named fruit. And here we have a third class of beverages. Beverages containing fruit juice, sugar, water, and tartaric or citric acid. These beverages are palatable and they are not objectionable, but you have a right to know whether any product you wish to buy derives its fruity character purely from added tartaric or citric acid, and whether it contains added sugar and added artificial color, and labels my friends tell you these facts. Consequently, examine the labels of beverages closely, look for the words, "Added Fruit Acid", "Added Sugar", and "Artificial Color". When you find them on labels you will know that the product is deficient in fruit juice to give it the essential fruit juice characters and that the flavor and color deficiency has been made up by the use of less costly ingredients.

Now, we come to the fourth class of beverages. These are made of sugar sirup, fruit acid, and artificial color with a very minute proportion of imitation fruit flavor or true fruit flavor. These products simulate fruit juice closely enough so that the amount of fruit juice in them can be further reduced and still further reduced to the point where it practically disappears, and this is the last class of fruit like beverages which I am going to discuss, namely, the imitation fruit beverages. These are commonly called soda or pop. They derive their imitation fruit character from sugar sirup, fruit acid, artificial color, and true or imitation fruit flavors, and in the case of citrus fruit, the flavor is derived from the peel of the fruit. Some of these bottled sodas do contain a small amount of fruit juice, but even when they do, they can hardly be classed as fruit juice beverages, because they owe their character chiefly to ingredients other than fruit juices.

These products serve a useful purpose. They are wholesome when properly made, and are desirable for the purpose for which they are used. If artificially colored, if flavored with imitation or synthetic flavors, you will find statements to this effect made on the bottle label or on the crown cap.

Now besides beverages of the fruit or fruit type, there are beverages of the non-fruit type, such as gingerale, rootbeer, sarsaparilla,

beverages of the stimulant type which contain caffeine, which is as you know, the active principal of tea and coffee. These beverages all have a composition peculiar to their own type and often peculiar to the particular brand.

While the status of the labels of caffeine-containing beverages has not been determined in a final way by the courts, we believe that a strict interpretation of the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act would require that the presence of caffeine be plainly stated on the label. Certainly, the presence of caffeine should be declared when it is added to beverages such as gingerale, near beer, etc., in which it is not a normal constituent.

The Federal Food and Drugs Act prohibits the use of saccharin in foods. Saccharin you know is a coal tar product with a sweetening power 500 times as great as sugar, and because of its relative cheapness this product has from time to time been used to adulterate beverages. As I say, food products which are shipped in interstate commerce are not allowed to contain saccharin. This is because saccharin has no food value and because it is believed to be deleterious to health. A few of the States, however, permit the sale within their own borders of beverages containing saccharin, but, as I believe, most such States require a declaration of the presence of saccharin to be plainly made on labels, therefore my advice to you is to look on labels of beverages for the declaration of the product saccharin.

A very important consideration in the manufacture of wholesome beverages is that the water supply employed shall be pure, uncontaminated, and that the containers shall be clean. Your State, City, and Federal food and drug officials are safeguarding these factors.

There are other classes of beverage preparations which are offered to you in concentrated, liquid, and powdered form for the manufacture of beverages in the home. You should read the labels on these products in the same way I have tried to show you to read labels on bottled beverages.

My friends before you can become intelligent buyers you must know the significance of statements on labels and I have been trying for weeks to give you the basic information to make you intelligent label readers and therefore discriminating, careful, and economic buyers. I have covered a vast number of our food products already, and all of this information is available to you in mimeographed form for the asking. My talk on vitamins alone will be worth your time and trouble in writing me a postal card for the complete series. Write to W. R. M. Wharton, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick Street, New York City. I will be with you again next week at this hour and I thank you.